GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:133
ANSWERED ON:31.07.2001
FEMALE LITERACY
SHIVAJI VITHALRAO KAMBLE

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether female literacy rate is far below the rate of national literacy in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) the rate of female literacy and that of national literacy, as on January 01, 1991 and January 01,1999 separately; and

(d) the steps taken to improve the female literacy rate in the country?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI)

(a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PART (a) TO (d) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.133 TO BE ANSWERED ON 31.7.200 ASKED BY SHRI SHIVAJI VITHALRAO KAMBLE

As per Census 2001, female literacy rate is 54.16% while the National literacy rate is 65.38%. Historically, factors found to be responsible for poor female literacy rate are :-

-• Gender based inequality
-• Social discrimination
-• Poverty
-• Occupation of girl child in domestic chores
-• Low enrolment of girls in schools
-• Low retention rate and high dropout rate

A comparison of Census, 1991, National Family Health Survey (NFHS)(1998-99) released in November 2000 and Census 2001, which is given below, indicates that significant progress has been made in the field of female literacy :

Census 1991	NFHS 1998-99	Census 2001
Person	52.2	63.1	65.38
Male	64.13	74.5	75.85
Female	39.3	51.4	54.16

This shows that:

-• The literacy rate has increased from 52.21% in 1991 to 65.38% in 2001. This 13.17 percentage points increase is the highest recorded in any decade since independence.

-• The gap in male-female literacy rates has decreased from 24.8 percentage points in 1991 to 21.7 percentage points in 2001.

-• Female literacy increased by 14.8 percentage points i.e. from 39.3% to 54.16 % as against 11.7 percentage points i.e. 64.1% to 75.8% increase in male literacy. Government has taken following steps to improve the female literacy in the country:

(a) A new scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has beenstarted for Universalization of Elementary Educationin a mission mode with a district focus. SSAis to provide useful and relevant Elementary Education for all children in the 6-14 age groupby 2010. The goals are as follows:

-• All children in school, Education Guarantee Scheme center, Alternate school, 'Back-to-School' camp by 2003.

-• All children complete five year primary education by 2007.

-• All children complete eight years of schooling by 2010.

-• Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life.

-• Bridge all gender and social gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

-• Universal retention by 2010.

The education of girls is a primary focus of the SSA. Efforts will be made to mainstream gender concerns in all activities under SSA.

(b) National Literacy Mission (NLM) seeks to attain fullliteracy i.e. sustainable threshold level of 75 percent by 2005. It seeks to achieve this goal by imparting functional literacy to non- literate in 15-35 year age group. Major thrust of the programme is on promotion of literacy among women. In the literacy programmes, 60% of the learners are women and around 60% of volunteers also are women & young girls.

Literacy Campaigns have lead to −

-• Heightened social awareness;
-• Created demand for primary education
-• Increased school enrolment;
-• Gender equality and women's empowerment

National Literacy Mission had received the prestigious Noma Literacy Award in 1999 for outstanding efforts in spreading literacy, creating awareness and demand for literacy. UNESCO has now decidedto give Honourable mention of Noma LiteracyPrize to Mahila Samakhya Programme for the year 2001. Mahila Samakhaya Programme builds capacities among groups of women and contributes towards empowerment of women in rural areas, particularly from socially and economically marginalized groups.